



CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN

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Interviews with workers, survivors and relatives of workers who died in the Spectrum-Shahriyar disaster.

Transcripts of interviews with Spectrum workers and relatives of workers who died or are still missing as well as interviews with a few workers of the adjacent Shahriyar Fabrics factory. Most of the workers were contacted with the help of the National Garments Workers Federation (NGWF) and the Bangladesh Garments Independent Workers Federation (BGIWF) who took the researcher to the orthopaedic hospital. All names of the interviewees were omitted to protect their identity.

SURVIVORS WHO WERE WORKING THE NIGHT OF THE COLLAPSE

1. Sweater machine operator - 7th floor



At the time of the collapse there were about 80 workers on my floor, 3 of them were women - Momotaz, Amena and Alea. Suddenly everything became dark, the electricity went off and there was a big bang like a thunder, things were falling, some heavy things fell on me. I was under the rubble for 16 hours and have a damaged collarbone and kidney - I have to use a catheter and will get a kidney operation after 3 months. I was in 4 different hospitals for 18 days altogether. While I was in the hospital, two people from BGMEA came and gave me 9000 Taka for treatment (Note: 1000 Taka is approximately 13 Euro). They also promised to pay the remaining 9000 Taka for treatment later on and to pay for the operation. I received 30 days salary - 5000 Taka, but I should still receive 20 days salary. I worked for piece rate, working 12 to 16 hours per day and making around 5000 Taka every month. I get 20 Taka per piece.

2. Worker who worked on the 7th floor





I was under the rubble for 24 hours. I have a broken arm and several marks on my neck and back. I was in Habib clinic for 18 days. One BGMEA person came and promised to pay my expenses, but I have not received any money yet. Only my salary. I received 3950 Taka salary for 30 days, 20 days salary are still due. I work in production, that is on piece rate.

3. Worker who worked on ground floor with dyeing machine



On my floor there were about 20 people working at the time of collapse. I was freed from under the rubble after about 3 hours. I know of two person who died on my floor - Robin and Rafiq -, and one who lost his hand. My own hand is badly damaged, it is very swollen. I received 2000 Taka twice for treatment from the management. I did not get any compensation. Instead of 2000 Taka salary I was given only 1300 and 20 days salary and 10 days overtime are still due.

4. Cleaner - was on 4th floor



I worked with Spectrum for only one month and 11 days. I was on the 4th floor at the time of the collapse and was rescued after about 4 hours. My shoulder is dislocated. I was in hospital for 4 days. BGMEA people paid the hospital and gave me 4000 Taka. I live here with my wife and 10-year old son, my daughter is already married. My wife got a job with Shahriyar Fabrics 7 days before the collapse, so she is now also jobless. We have no other source of income and our house rent is 350 Taka per month.

5. Cleaner - was on 4th floor



I worked there for 8 months. I was eating together with two other persons on the 4th floor when suddenly the light went off and things started falling. A pillar fell on my right hand fingers, breaking them. My hips, legs and eyes are still very painful. One of the other persons who were with me died while the second person died on the way to the hospital. Their names were Jamal and Razzak. I was rescued the next morning at 11 o'clock. I was in Savar hospital for 3 days. Manager Bugari gave me 2000 Taka for medicines. BGMEA people came to the hospital and told me that I had to go to Farmgate hospital for my painful hips and legs. I was x-rayed and stayed in hospital for 11 days. I earned 1700 Taka per month, I still have to get salary for 20 days work and for 10 days overtime. I have three small sons and a small daughter. Another daughter works in another garments factory and earns 1500 Taka per month. My wife doesn't work.

6. Helper working on 1st floor - dyeing section



My job is to fold and transfer the fabrics to a machine operator. There were about 150 workers on my floor that night, about 100 could escape during and after the collapse. The doors of my floor were open but the main gate on the road side was locked. The key was with one of the Ansars (guards) who didn't want to open the gate. He only did so after a security man came and forced him to open it. I and some others took out about 30 people from the collapsed building. We tried to stop cars on the road to take the wounded to the hospital, but cars didn't stop. Then we made a roadblock, we put all bricks on the road and so forced cars to stop. I don't know how many died. I only know that my supervisor - Amin - died. I also don't know how many people were taken to the hospital. All my friends came out more or less unhurt. My basic salary was 1800 Taka. On my floor there we always worked in two shifts - a day shift from 8 in the morning to 8 in the evening and a night shift from 8 evening to 8 morning. We work one week dayshift and then one week nightshift. For 1 hour overtime I receive 5 Taka for day-shifts and for night-shifts we receive no overtime. Only when we work on Fridays we get 18 hours overtime for the nightshift and six hours for the dayshift. I get my salary correctly, but for the last month I got only half salary. I came to Dhaka one and a half years ago. I am from Pabna district. I am alone here, my parents and 2 married sisters are at home. My father is a sharecropper, we have no land of our own. I cannot send any money home because my wages are too low, I need all my money for myself to survive.

7. 7th floor machine operator



It was snack time and the supervisor said he will bring the snacks. Suddenly the floor started sinking, like we were in a lift. From up some things fell on my head, then I became unconscious. When I woke up after some time I was lying flat, with my face on the floor, everything was dark, I could hear other people calling 'mother, mother'. I had hardly any space to move, there was only this much [shows about 30 cm] above me. I could only lie down. A pillar had fallen

just next to me. I could hear people's voices outside and I called them, but they did not hear me. Then I found a stick near me, and I poked with it to give a signal. Then they discovered me. They had to cut steel rods and then I was free, after about 17 or 18 hours, at around 5 in the afternoon. Then I was taken to the hospital and I was x-rayed. Nothing was broken, but my breast, ribs and legs still hurt a lot. I was in the hospital for 5 days. Two persons who were near me died and another one died in the hospital. The AGM (Assistant General Manager) and someone from the accounts department came to see me in the hospital. They said they will give some assistance but they did not give anything. The government paid for the hospital, I was in a government hospital, but I had to pay myself for all my medicines. It is very difficult now, I am the only breadwinner and I have one son and one daughter, they are still small. I have no income now and I have to pay 1500 Taka rent per month. I asked the landlord to waive at least one month rent.

8. Machine operator 7th floor



I am injured on my leg and shoulder, I am still limping. They brought me to the Nightingale hospital, the Director came there and gave me 4000 Taka. I was in the hospital for 1 day. Five people were lying near me in the rubble, they all came out alive, but one had his arm amputated. There were about 100 people on our floor. We were making sweaters, orange ones, red ones, blue ones, all kind of colours. I don't know who the buyers were.

9. 7th floor machine operator - came out unharmed

I was next to a window with a grill when the factory collapsed. That saved my life. I came out of the building only ten minutes after the collapse. I know because I looked at my watch when I came out, it showed 1.04 a.m. I did not go to the hospital as I had only a small wound on my foot. I received 1 month salary, but 20 days overtime are still due.

10. Machine operator on 7th floor - left arm amputated



My wife worked on the same floor, she left the factory that night at 9 p.m.. I worked there since 2 months, and as I didn't know the names of all the workers, I asked some of them their name. On the machine next to me was Imon Hossain. He was also working that night but they never found his body. [His wife shows Imon's photo.] The management says that he didn't work that night but I know for sure that he was in the factory that night, I have seen him. I myself was taken out of the collapsed building by about 3.30 in the afternoon the next day. I was taken to the Army Medical hospital and was operated at about 7 p.m.. The doctor told me that they would try to save my arm, but they might have to amputate it. He asked my consent. I told him to do what is best. We are poor, so if you can save my arm, then keep it. The operation succeeded very well. Then on 13 April, around 2 p.m. I was sent to

this hospital. From BGMEA Mr. Belal comes every now and then and someone from the owner's side, an accountant (Zahed?) - who used to pay our salary. He gave some money - 9000 Taka The owner and director never came to see us. BGMEA gave 6000 Taka I did not pay for the operation, that was free, a government hospital.

My family has 5 members - my wife, son, my sister and my mother. I was taking care of all of them. Some provisions will have to be made for me to live. We are both unemployed now. Now my wife has to take care of the family. I cannot do anything.

Q.: I heard that some people had reported a crack in the wall. Do you know about that?

No, we have not seen any crack. It is a lie. If it was true everybody would be scared and no one would work there. I heard that the foundation was for 5 floors, but they made 9 floors. Therefore many of my friends died. On my floor there was a woman who was to deliver a baby in one and a half months. She also died. Alea, they recovered her body 4 days later. She had asked for leave from the owner, but they had forbidden it, had not given her leave. On my floor there were 2 women, both of them died. From the other one they didn't find the dead body. Her name was Parbin, isn't it? [He asks his wife.]

Q. How many people were working on the 7th floor?

In the daytime there were more people. There were 300 machines, so about 350 people. On the 4th floor there were also 300 machines, for t-shirts. One worker per machine and then the supervisor, inspectors, quality controllers, distributors, helpers, etc., so in total about 350. The machines are very close together, there is hardly any space to walk in between. The machines were too heavy for the floor. The people working on the 3kg machines had left at 9 p.m.. Only the 7kg machines were running, so there were 125 to 130 people working that night. Our supervisor and some 2, 3 other people I know survived - Kamal, Monjur. I don't know all who died, but I know Soikat and Alim, he was distributor. And Imon Hossain, he is missing. The management said he was not working that night, but that is not true, The supervisor and 6 to 7 other workers can also tell that he worked there that night.

Q. Was there any register of the workers?

Yes, they kept a register, how many workers were working, what time they came. But what have they done with that? It was on the 5th floor, near the gate on a table. They [management] say it was destroyed. They are big people.

On the 4th floor there were machines to make t-shirts, there were also many workers there, and on the ground floor. On the 6th floor there were a few people, for repair work.

His wife tells: We also came that night, but they gave us too little salary, so we got angry and refused to work and went home.

He continues: On the 20th of the month the salary is fixed and on the 10th of the next month it is paid. Sometimes we would get it one more month later. So that was not good for the people, we are all poor. On the night of the accident it was the 10th, payday. Some people had been working till 9 p.m. and others came for the night shift at 9 p.m.. Between 9 and 10 p.m. salaries were paid. The owner gave us once less salary, but we could not say anything. If we would say something the owner's enforcers (mastan) would come and beat us up and they would call the police. In all areas owners know the enforcers very well, they have a good relationship with them.

I want to tell you one more thing. There are many garment factories and they make an audit, to see how the factory is running and whether we get our rights. 100% they have not done this, but for the buyers they need a receipt, so they just take a signature from some operators. The buyers don't understand Bengali, otherwise we could tell them how it is run.

His wife: In the season we have to work about 20 nights per month, and 10 nights we have leave. But the management says there is no night work [they don't get paid overtime for night work] even though we work till 12 p.m. or the whole night, but they say we worked till 10 p.m., they don't even give 1 Taka for night work.

He: The government gives a weekly holiday on Fridays, but we also have to do duty on Fridays. If you don't do it you're out, you have no job. We are simple people, we have no peace.

Q. How much salary did you earn?

I earned 8 to 9000 Taka per month. I was doing production work. There are different prices for piece rate. Some pieces are 100 Taka, some can also be 8 Taka It depends on what piece it is. Nowadays everything is very expensive, oil is 60 Taka per kg, rice 20 Taka per kg. But our salary doesn't go up. People who have a government job get yearly increment, but we don't.

Wife: I earn about the same. I am also doing production - linking operator - sewing the pieces together. Piece rate is 15 Taka, about 4 to 5000 Taka per month.

Q. Who was the buyer that night?

We don't know. The supervisor will know. We never see any label, the label is sewn on downstairs on the 3rd floor in the finishing section. There were a few people on the third floor that night. On all floors there were people, but most on 7th, 4th and first. From the 4th and 3rd floor all people died, don't know how many workers there were. On the 4th floor and ground floor they worked 24 hours 12 months a year, shifting duty.

Wife: After the accident we went to the factory at 2 a.m., then 10 to 12 dead bodies were taken out. We saw Momotaz, a woman was taken out, after that one man, then one more man, it was like that. One man died in front of our eyes. And we saw two people alive in the building on the ground floor, where a wall had caved in. The pregnant woman who died - it is a government law that pregnant women have to get leave 3 months before delivery. She should have been given leave. If she had not gone she would not have received her salary. Therefore she lost her life.

Conditions in the factory were also not very good. For instance, there was no toilet on the 7th floor, the men had to go to the 5th floor for that. There was a toilet on the 6th floor, but that one was only for women.

11. Machine operator on 7th floor in orthopaedic hospital



He has a big wound over the whole length of his left arm and left leg on both sides and he misses several fingers on his left hand. He is obviously in a lot of pain.

It all happened in a second, everything started falling down. I was taken out around 6.30 in the morning. I have been operated on my left arm and leg. They have taken skin from my thighs and transplanted that on my arm and leg. I received 11000 Taka in total from BGMEA. I am married, this is my wife, we don't have any children yet. I am from a big family of 11 persons. I have 4 brothers and 2 sisters. Most of them are in the village in Mymensingh. My eldest brother is agricultural labourer. We have no land. My parents are old now, my father cannot work any more. I was the only breadwinner. I demand 4 lakh [400,000] Taka

12. Man in hospital, his right leg is amputated



I worked on 7th floor as machine operator. No, I am not married, this is my mother here, my father is in the village.

13. Man whose heel/ankle is broken in 3 places

[He is clearly in a lot of pain.]



I worked on the 7th floor. My foot is broken in 3 places. I have been operated. The doctor told me that I need one more operation.

WORKERS WHO WERE NOT WORKING THE NIGHT OF THE COLLAPSE

1. Supervisor of 284 labourers on 2nd floor

I started working here 4 years ago. I had left the factory at 10 o'clock that night. The workers on my floor had been put under pressure by the director to work the night shift but they had refused, as they had not received any salary since 2 months. So we had all gone home. I have a fixed salary of 5000 Taka, the other workers get 4000 p/m. After the collapse we received salary for 2 weeks from the AGM [Assistant General Manager] - Tazul Islam, so 6 weeks salary are still due.

The machines were too heavy for the factory, about 3 to 4 ton each, they should have been on the ground floor, but the owner insisted on placing them on the 4th floor.

No, I don't know anything about cracks in the wall. I have also never seen anyone who came for inspection.

Q.: What about the boiler incident that had been reported and in which one worker had died?

No, there was no explosion, but hot water had leaked from the pipe of a dyeing machine and so the worker sustained burns. He died from these burns. The boiler was a problem. It was on the ground floor and was on 24 hours a day and very hot. Due to the heat the 1st and 2nd floor were very hot and unpleasant to work. We complained many times but the management ignored our complaints.

2. Spectrum worker who was not present that night



I lost my job like everyone else. I started working there only 19 days ago. The factory still owes me 19 days salary. This card shows the days I have worked. I asked for my salary but have not received it so far. I worked in production, for piece rate.

3. Fitter and in charge of 4th floor

I worked in the factory for 7 years. I did not work the night of the collapse [Interviewer's note: The Spectrum factory operated since 2000, so he probably worked in the adjacent Shahriyar Fabrics before. I realised this only later, so I did not ask him about it.]

There is one day shift and one night shift. There were around 35 labourers on my floor that night, all men, I know of 3 who died. The dead are Shahin, my brother in law, Mintu and Zarul. The floor was clearly not very strong. When large parcels of 50 kg were dropped on the floor you could feel the floor shake. The machines weigh about 3 to 4 tons. I have never seen anyone coming for inspection. During the collapse people were working only on the 7th floor and on the ground floor. There are not enough knitting machines, that is why these people had to work in two shifts, one day-shift and one night-shift. On the 7th floor sweaters were made, on the 4th floor t-shirts, while dyeing took place on the ground floor.

I earn 16500 Taka per month, including overtime it is 20.000 Taka.

(Interviewer's note: He earned much more than anyone else I have talked to. His lives in an apartment building, he is clearly in a much better position than all the other workers I have met.) I have not yet received my back wages. [The trade union worker who accompanies the interviewer points out: "He has very good relations with the management, he will definitely get his salary."]

Q.: There were a few accidents before the collapse, the boiler accident and electrocution accident, what happened exactly?

With regard to the boiler accident, it was not the boiler, it was a dyeing machine. The labourer had made a mistake, he opened a tap of the machine and that is how hot water had escaped from the pipe and burnt him. He died from the burns. As to the electrocution accident: an electric wire had broken and a woman got injured because she had grabbed the wire. She sustained serious burns and is still in hospital. She got compensation, I don't know how much.

4. Knitting machine operator on 7th floor, was not working the night of the collapse

I left the factory that night at 9 p.m. There were about 80-85 people on the 7th floor and on 4th floor there were 110-120, on the ground floor about 50 plus 8 staff. I heard of the collapse at 1.15 a.m., I live near the factory. I heard about it from my brother and went there immediately. There was no building left. I went on top of the building and pulled out one person - Habib, card nr. 3, he had some small wounds on his head and leg. There were already many people there, as well as the police, but the army had not yet arrived on the scene. Around 2 o'clock I went to the hospital to see my friends, there were already some 15 people in the hospital, they were badly injured. One of my friends - Roton - died in the collapse. The factory still owes me 20 days salary, about 4000 Taka. I worked for piece rate and I earned between 4000 and 7000 Taka per month. All knitting machine work of sweaters and t-shirts is piece rate. People who fix labels, do inspections, etc. get a fixed salary of about 2000 Taka per month.

5. Woman who worked on 2nd floor, was not working that night



On my floor there are two sections, in my section there are 52 people, six male and the rest were female. I don't know how many workers there are in the other section. I have been working there for 7 months. I worked for 4 years in two other factories. I left the factory that night at 7 p.m., no one on my floor

worked that night. I went to the site at 5 o'clock in the morning, as soon as I got up I heard the news. When I came there I saw seven coffins. After one week I saw 4 more bodies taken out, I couldn't tell who they were, they were unrecognizable. I don't know any of the dead or wounded people.

I do inspection work, my basic salary is 3000 Taka per month plus about 400 Taka bonuses. How much do we get for overtime? [she asks a few other workers who are around]. Overtime pays 10 Taka per hour. For the night shift we get 30 Taka extra. On night shifts we often have to work till 3 a.m. in the morning, then we go home and then have to start again at 8 a.m.. For lunch we get 1 hour. I go home for lunch because I live near the factory. At night if we have to work overtime we only get a little snack, 2 bananas and a piece of cake. We get it from the factory at around 7 p.m.. There is no canteen in the factory. The earliest we are ever allowed to go home from work is 7 p.m., but most of the time we have to work till 9 or 12 p.m. and often even till three o'clock in the morning. We never receive overtime pay for that. I worked 20 to 25 nights last month. In February the factory gave eight days leave because there was no work, but these days were deducted from our salaries. I received half of my salary for April (1500 Taka) but the factory didn't give night-shift pay.

6. Supervisor since 2 years



I worked for Spectrum for 3 years on the 7th floor. I was not there that night, but my brother was. He died in the collapse. His name was Shafiqul Islam. He also worked on the 7th floor for the last two and a half years as a knitting operator. I don't know how many people worked there that night. I heard of the collapse at 9 o'clock in the morning and went there immediately. Everything was blocked, I couldn't get to the place. I went to search for my brother in all the hospitals, but I couldn't find him. They found his body on April 15th. No one from the factory management, or from BGMEA came to see us. When we took my brother's body to our village in Rajbari for burial, BGMEA gave 5000 Taka. We did not get compensation yet, but we have all the papers ready now. When the factory was built I witnessed the construction. I saw what materials they used: only bricks and sand in the foundation. I have never seen anyone come for inspection.

My brother was married two months ago, his wife is now working since May 2nd in another factory. She got the job just before the collapse. My mother is with me now, my father is in the village, with my wife. I go there regularly to see them. I myself earn 1100 Taka basic salary. I received my salary the day of the collapse but I still have to receive 20 days salary for my brother.

7. Store worker, worked for both factories



I worked in the store department to load and unload stocks of thread etc. I left the factory at 10 p.m.. that night, I live very near the factory. The Shahriyar Fabrics was closed that night at 10 p.m.. I was at the site 20 minutes after the collapse and saw arms and legs sticking out. We recovered some 24 people alive, one was dead and 3 were heavily wounded. Of the people who died I

knew Rafiq, he was boiler operator and Amin, the supervisor on the ground floor, he had gone to the 4th floor to bring cloth. Two women have died, one of them was found that night, the body of the other was found later.

Q.: Have you seen or heard about any cracks in the building?

Yes, I have seen a crack, on the backside - the eastside, in the ceiling on the side of the bathroom. I saw that 5 days before the collapse and reported it to the engineer, his name is Liton. He works there always, some construction work was going on inside on the 9th floor. The engineer told me 'huh, what do you understand'. Go back to your work and don't talk about it to anyone. People might get scared. So I didn't talk about it to others. I don't know how many knitting machines there were but there were 32 very heavy knitting machines for knitting t-shirts. When the machines were started the building was bumping.

Q.: Do you know who were the buyers and brands for which the factory was producing that night?

I have kept some labels from work that was going on there, I will get them. [He brings the following labels:

- Attention
- B&C European Style
- Vice Versa GR
- Concept EB with a P.O.Box address in Colon, Germany]

FAMILY OF SPECTRUM- WORKERS WHO DIED IN THE COLLAPSE

1. Family of Abdul Salam who died



Father, mother, son of 10 years old and a daughter of 6. Abdul Salam's father : My son was 18 years old, he had studied up to grade 8 and worked in the factory since 39 days, on the 7th floor. They found his body after four days. Yesterday (May 3rd) the BMGEA came and brought a cheque for 79,000 Taka. They told us that we would get another 21,000 Taka later on. The BGMEA person also told us that if anyone of my family needs a job we should approach them and they would mediate. I work as a cook in a restaurant, I am the only earning member now. We received only 9 days salary of our son - 1600 Taka. Someone else must have taken the rest of the salary, a receipt had been signed for it but I don't know who had signed, I did not.

2.Mother, sister and sister in law of Rashadul Islam who died



Rashadul's mother: Rashadul was our youngest son, he worked on the 7th floor, he was knitting machine operator. He earned 5 to 7000 Taka per month. He had worked in the garment industry for 3 years and had been working at Spectrum only for 41 days. His body was found after 5 days. No one from the factory

came to see us and we have not received any salary so far, or any compensation. We already have all the documents necessary to get compensation but where do we have to go with them? We don't know. Rashadul's elder sister: "I worked at Shahriyar Fabrics, I started at the same time as Rashadul. One of my brothers works at another garment factory." Mother: Two other sons and one daughter are in Dinajpur. We are from Dinajpur in the north, it is very far.

3. Young man who lost 3 family members



[Interviewer's note: I was promised an interview the next day, but never met him again.]

4. Elder brother of Badsa (s/o Fozur Ali) who died



[They first show me photographs of Badsa, his father and his wife, which they have ready for the application for compensation.]

Badsa was about 18 years, he worked on the 7th floor. Alom from the management came to our house and told that we will get the 1 lakh [100,000) Taka compensation money, but we have not received anything yet. We have all the papers ready. [The trade union worker who accompanies the researcher explains that they have to give the papers to the BGMEA.] Badsa was married since 6 months. His wife went to her home village, we don't think she will come back, she is mad. [Researcher's note: I sense that there may be a conflict between Badsa's family and his wife about the compensation.]

I heard of the collapse at 1 o'clock that night and went there immediately to search for my brother. I have taken about 10 to 15 people out of the collapsed building but I did not find my brother. [He shows the wounds on his feet from going through the rubble.] Badsa was living in the room next to me here [a tin sheet house]. We each have to pay 600 Taka rent per month. My parents are in the village.

5. Younger sister of Milon who died

My brother was about 20 years. He was machine operator on the 7th floor. They found his body only after 3 days. On Tuesday we received 79000 Taka and we were told that we will get another 21000 Taka [from the labour court]. We also received his full salary, the same day as the factory collapsed. Milon was the only son. My father died, I live with my mother and one sister. I myself worked next door, in Shahriyar Fabrics, my salary was 1600 Taka. Now I am jobless. My brother worked in production, on piece rate, he earned around 3000 per month. Our house rent is 1000 Taka per month, including gas and electricity. It is difficult now.

6. Father in law of Abu Hashem Mollah who died

My son-in-law worked on that 7th floor, he was machine operator. My daughter is 9 months pregnant, she is staying in her in-laws house. There is a problem now. Her in-laws want my daughter to sign for the money, but then they want to keep all the money for themselves. My daughter has proposed to her in-laws to share with them but they don't want that. What can we do about this. [Researcher's note: According to Muslim inheritance law in Bangladesh a wife has to get one-fourth of the property of her husband if they have no children and one-eights if they have children.]

7. Wife (16 or 17 years old) of Siddiqui who died

My husband worked there only since 9 days, he was machine operator on the 7th floor. We were married 8 months ago. Just yesterday [7 May] Alom Shaheb from the management came and collected my signature for compensation. I don't know exactly what was on the paper that I signed. He insisted that I put my signature. Alom Shaheb said it was to get compensation, so I signed. He told me that I will get one-fourth of the compensation money, but I requested to get half so that I have some security. I have no income now. We rent this room [in a tin-sheet house] for 800 Taka per month. My sister lives in another room here, she works in another garments factory. My husband had no brothers, only 4 married sisters. My husband and I came from the village only 2 months ago to search for work. My father in law died 1 month ago, one month after we came here. And then finally my husband got this job, only 9 days ago. What will be my future?

8. Relative of Imon Hossain - missing

His body has not been recovered, they now say that he did not work that night, but that is not true. I know hat he was working that night. Imon's father is Abdul Khalek Talukdar. He is from village Kolchuri Sostal, Kalkini Thana, Dt. Madhapur.

9. Zohirul Islam - missing

Son of Charag Ali, village Idrogpur, PO Habsopur, Moheshpur Thana, Dt. Jhinaidah.

His father had been crying at the factory site and then told one of the trade union workers that his son was missing.

10. Cousin of Anwar Hossain - missing

Anwar was machine operator on 7th floor. He is from village LS Kila, Nokla Thana, Dt. Sherpur. His dead body has not been found. I was all the time at the factory site to see whether they found him, but he was not found. I reported him missing to the army, but they didn't want to take my report. Then I went to the police, they told me that I was lying. What can I do? Anwar had 4 brother, one brother was married and two married sisters. One brother was also working for Spectrum but he did not work that night, another brother works in another garments factory. His parents are old, they depend on their sons for their living.

11. Mother in law of Nazrul Islam who died

He worked on the 4th floor, he was knitting machine operator. His wife's name is Sahera, she is my daughter. They have a 7 year old daughter. My daughter has gone to her in-laws house in Jamalpur to get all the documents for compensation.

1. Woman who worked for Shahriyar Fabrics



I worked on the 2nd floor as inspector. My salary was 1800 Taka. For overtime we get 40% (she is told this by a few male workers who are also present). In my section there are 60 workers, 22 are men. That night no one was working there. We are never allowed to go home at 5 p.m., at the earliest we leave at 8 or 9 p.m.. In January we had to work till 2 a.m. in the morning. At night the floor doors are open, but all the windows are closed. It gets very stuffy. This is to prevent insects from coming in. The main gate outside is locked. When we have leave on Fridays we have to work Thursday night till 12 o'clock. Last month we worked all Fridays, the previous month there was no work on Fridays. We also get 1 hour lunchtime off and a snack at 7 p.m. if we have to work longer.

2. Man who worked Shahriyar Fabrics on the 3rd floor



On the third floor there were cutting machines, all these machines were operated by men only. I left the factory that night at 10 p.m.. There are 120 workers on my floor. My basic salary is 2600 Taka plus overtime 40%. I work from 8 in the morning till 10 or 12 at night. I receive 10,38 Taka per hour of overtime. Last month I worked every Friday. Per month I usually have only one Friday off. My total salary, including overtime, is mostly 4500 to 5000 Taka. I received only half of my salary for last month (1300 Taka). Overtime money is still due.

3. Woman about 16 years, unmarried, worked for Shahriyar Fabrics



I am a helper, worked on the 3rd floor where they are sewing t-shirts. I worked there for 6 months, my basic salary is 700 Taka. I worked from 8 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon and sometimes until 7, 8 or 12 night. Including overtime I

get about 1000 Taka per month. Last month I received 1000 Taka and in the month before that 900 Taka, that was less because I was absent for 3 days. I received my salary after the closure, but 10 days overtime are still due. I have studied up to fourth grade. I live with two sisters who are working in the same factory and my mother. My father lives in Chandpur and comes regularly to do vegetable business. We have a small plot of land. Two other sisters are married, they also live elsewhere. I give all the money that I earn to my mother. My family came to Dhaka when I was 9 months old.

4. Woman, unmarried, worked for Shahriyar Fabrics

Like my sister I am also a t-shirts sewing helper on the 3rd floor. I worked there since 3 months, my basic salary is 700 Taka, excluding overtime. I have studied up to grade 5. I never work nightshifts. I don't know how much I got for overtime last month, I gave everything to my mother.

5. Woman divorced, has a son of 3, worked at Shahriyar Fabrics

I am a sister of the other two women. I also worked on the 3rd floor as helper. I started working there 3 months ago. My basic salary is 700 Taka, plus extra for overtime. I have been working in the garment industry for a long time. Before my marriage I worked for about seven or eight years and after I got married I worked for six years, so I have 13 to 14 years experience. In other factories I worked first as a helper and then as a machine operator. I give my salary to my mother but I keep my overtime money.

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